
**Select Committee on
Environmental Health Committee**

HB 1024

Brief Description: Phasing out the use of polybrominated diphenyl ethers.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Priest, Kessler, B. Sullivan, Dickerson, Jarrett, Hasegawa, Campbell, Rodne, Rolfes, McDermott, McIntire, Chase, Green, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Quall, Conway, Clibborn, Sommers, Morrell, Sells, Kenney, Haigh, Cody, Hunt, Lantz, McCoy, Appleton, Pettigrew, Schual-Berke, Roberts, Fromhold, Takko, Simpson, P. Sullivan, Lovick, Flannigan, Moeller, Miloscia, Williams, Blake, O'Brien, Linville, Wood, Goodman, Seaquist, Springer, Ericks, Kagi, Darneille, Dunshee and Strow; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the manufacture, sale, or distribution of most products containing PBDEs after January 1, 2008.
- Exempts Deca-BDE from the ban except for mattresses, residential upholstered furniture, and televisions and computers with an electronic enclosure that contains Deca-BDE.
- Directs the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Department of Health (DOH) to report to the Legislature regarding the availability of alternatives to the use of Deca-BDE with the assistance of a fire safety committee to assess the fire safety of any alternatives.

Hearing Date: 1/9/07

Staff: Brad Avy (786-7289).

Background:

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs, are members of a broader class of brominated chemicals used as flame retardants. They are often added to products such as computers, televisions, furniture, and carpet pads to reduce the risk of fire if a product is exposed to heat or flame. There are three main types of PBDEs used in consumer products; Penta-BDE, Octa-BDE,

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and Deca-BDE. Polybrominated diphenyl ethers have been measured in blood, fat, and breast milk in people around the world.

In general, animal toxicity studies indicate that the PBDEs in Penta-BDE commercial products are more toxic than PBDEs in Octa- or Deca-BDE. Deca-BDE is the least toxic, but there is growing concern based on several new studies that indicate Deca-BDE is likely to degrade into the more toxic PBDEs found in Penta- or Octa-BDE products.

On January 28, 2004, Governor Locke signed Executive Order 04-01, directing state agencies to take certain actions regarding persistent toxic chemicals. The Department of Ecology (DOE), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), was directed to move forward immediately in developing a chemical action plan that identifies actions the state may take to reduce threats posed by PBDEs, and to recommend actions by December 1, 2004.

On December 31, 2004, the DOE and the DOH released the *Washington State Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether (PBDE) Chemical Action Plan: Interim Plan*, (Interim Plan).

The Interim Plan recommended:

- that the Legislature should prohibit the manufacture, distribution, or sale of new products containing Penta-BDE and Octa-BDE by July 2006;
- the ban may include an exemption for products that contain recycled material for products containing Penta-BDE and Octa-BDE;
- the DOE and the DOH must develop a proposal for a ban on appropriate products containing Deca-BDE by December 2005;
- by July 2006 the DOE must establish appropriate disposal and recycling practices for products containing PBDEs;
- restrictions for the state's purchase of PBDE products;
- development of educational materials; and
- direction for the Department of Labor and Industries to develop ways for employers and employees to minimize exposure to PBDEs.

In January 2006, the agencies issued a Final PBDE Chemical Action Plan (Chemical Action Plan) recommending that the Legislature immediately ban Penta-BDE and Octa-BDE. U.S. manufacturers of Penta-BDE and Octa-BDE voluntarily ceased producing the chemicals in December 2004, and production of Penta-BDE and Octa-BDE has ended in most international markets.

The Chemical Action Plan further recommended that use of a third form of PBDE, Deca-BDE, be banned, provided that safer, effective alternatives were identified, or upon finding additional evidence of harm caused by Deca-BDE.

Summary of Bill:

After January 1, 2008, no person may manufacture, knowingly sell, or distribute for in-state use non-edible products containing polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).

Exceptions to this ban include:

- products containing Deca-BDE, except for mattresses (effective January 1, 2008); and except for residential upholstered furniture, televisions or computers with electronic enclosures containing commercial Deca-BDE (effective January 1, 2011);

- used transportation vehicles and used or new parts manufactured before January 1, 2008 containing PBDEs;
- equipment containing PBDEs used primarily for military or federally funded space program applications;
- safety systems required by the Federal Aviation Administration;
- new raw material or parts used in transportation vehicles containing Deca-BDE;
- use of Deca-BDE in transportation equipment;
- sale or distribution of any used product containing PBDEs;
- any new product with recycled or used materials containing Deca-BDE;
- new carpet cushion made from recycled foam with less than one-tenth of one percent Penta-BDE; or
- medical devices.

The ban does not restrict the ability of a manufacturer, importer, or distributor from transporting products containing PBDEs through the state, or storing products for later distribution outside the state.

The DOE is to assist state agencies to give priority and preference to purchases that do not contain PBDEs.

An assessment process is established in which the DOE and the DOH review alternatives to Deca-BDE products with the consultation of a fire safety committee. The fire safety committee consists of a representative from the DOE as an ex officio nonvoting member, and the following five voting members or designees:

- State Director of Fire Protection;
- Executive Director of the Washington Fire Chiefs;
- Executive Secretary of the Washington Fire Commissioners Association;
- President of the Washington State Council of Firefighters; and
- President of the Washington State Firefighters' Association.

The DOE and the DOH are directed to report to the Legislature by December 15, 2008, on their findings regarding alternatives to the use of commercial Deca-BDE in residential upholstered furniture, televisions, and computers; and to report on findings of the fire safety committee. If no alternatives meet applicable fire safety standards, DOE must grant an exemption by rule. The report must also include any additional evidence of the potential harm posed by Deca-BDE.

The DOE and the DOH are also directed to review risk assessments, scientific studies, and other relevant findings on alternatives to the use of commercial Deca-DBE in products not directly addressed in the bill. If a safer and technically feasible alternative becomes available, the DOE must convene the fire safety committee to determine if the alternative meets applicable fire safety standards. Findings must be reported to the Legislature by December 15th of the year they are made.

The DOE is to assist manufacturers and retailers to achieve compliance. Retailers who unknowingly sell banned products are not liable under the bill. Manufacturers must notify sellers about the provisions in the bill no less than 90 days prior to the effective date of the restrictions. A manufacturer that produces, sells, or distributes a product prohibited from manufacture, sale, or distribution must recall the product and reimburse the retailer or other purchaser for the product and any shipping and handling.

Enforcement of this chapter must rely on notification and information exchange between the DOE and manufacturers. A warning letter may be issued to a manufacturer that violates provisions of this bill. If after one year compliance is not achieved, penalties may be assessed.

Manufacturers in violation of these provisions in the bill are subject to civil penalties of up to one thousand dollars for each violation in the case of a first offense. Manufacturers who are repeat violators are liable for up to five thousand dollars for each repeat offense. Penalties collected must be deposited in the State Toxics Control Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 3, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.